

Appl. No. 09/678,169
Amdt. dated July 21, 2005
Reply to Office action of April 1, 2005

Docket No. 10407-969

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:**Claim Amendments and Status:**

1-30. (canceled)

31. (previously presented) A gaming machine comprising:

a gaming unit having a housing, the housing comprising gaming components comprising:

(a) a game interface, the game interface configured to allow a game player to conduct gaming functions;

(b) a game processor located in the housing and in communication with the game interface, the game processor configured to control the game functions and game machine components;

(c) a cash transaction unit, the cash transaction unit configured to accept cash from, and dispense cash to, the game player, the cash transaction unit comprising:

i. a coin acceptor associated with the housing and configured to accept coins from the player;

ii. a coin dispenser associated with the housing; the coin dispenser configured to dispense coins to the player;

iii. a coin hopper, the coin hopper in communication with the coin acceptor and coin dispenser, the coin hopper configured to hold coins until they are to be dispensed to the player;

iv. a coin hopper controller associated with the housing and in communication with the coin acceptor, coin hopper and game processor; the coin hopper controller configured to detect coins inserted into the coin acceptor and to cause coins to be dispensed from the coin dispenser when directed by the game processor;

Appl. No. 09/678,169
Amdt. dated July 21, 2005
Reply to Office action of April 1, 2005

Docket No. 10407-969

(B) the gaming machine being modified in a retrofit fashion to further comprise a cash-less transaction system comprising:

(a) a cash-less device transaction unit mounted in communication with the game processor, the cashless device transaction unit configured to accept cash-less devices and to transmit and receive information;

(b) an interception and emulation unit mounted in communication with the cash-less device transaction unit and the game processor; wherein the interception and emulation unit is configured to perform the following:

i. intercept signals from the game processor, whereby the intercepted signals are not received as originally intended;

ii. emulate signals corresponding to gaming functions and transmit the signals to game components.

32. (previously presented) The gaming machine of claim 31 wherein the cash-less transaction system further comprises a network communication link between the cash-less transaction system and a remote network, the remote network configured to store cash-less device information.

33. (previously presented) The gaming machine of claim 32 wherein the remote network and the cash-less transaction system may exchange information regarding the cash-less device.

34. (previously presented) The gaming machine of claim 31 wherein the interception and emulation unit comprises:

(A) a smart machine interface board input/output controller (SMIB-I/O) interfaced with the game processor, wherein the SMIB-I/O is configured to intercept signals from, and transmit signals to, the game processor;

(B) a smart machine interface board (SMIB) in communication with the SMIB-I/O, the SMIB configured to receive signals from, and transmit signals to, the SMIB-I/O.

35. (previously presented) The gaming machine of claim 31 wherein the cash-less transaction system is located in a housing separate from the gaming machine housing.

Appl. No. 09/678,169
Amdt. dated July 21, 2005
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Docket No. 10407-969

36. (previously presented) The gaming machine of claim 31 wherein the cash transaction unit further comprises a paper currency acceptor, the paper currency acceptor in communication with the game processor.

37. (previously presented) A method of providing cash-less gaming in a gaming machine retrofitted to accept a cash-less devices comprising:

providing a game machine to a player, wherein the gaming machine is configured to accept currency, and wherein the game machine has been retrofitted to accept cash-less devices; accepting a cash-less device from the player;

sending a signal from a cash-emulation unit to a game processor, the signal directing the game processor to perform a game function, wherein the cash-emulation unit has been added to the gaming machine in a retrofit manner;

intercepting a signal from the game processor by an interception unit, whereby the signal sent from the game processor does not reach the intended recipient as originally intended by the game processor, wherein the interception unit has been added to the gaming machine in a retrofit manner; and

updating a value represented by the cash-less device, the value comprising at least one of the intercepted and emulated game processor signals.

38. (previously presented) The method of claim 37 further comprising maintaining a network connection between a remote network and at least one of the interception unit and the cash-emulation unit.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 38 further comprising exchanging information about the cashless device over the network connection.

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Examiner Interview Summary:

Applicant's representative conducted a telephonic interview with the Examiner on June 29, 2005. The Applicant's representative and the Examiner discussed the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection based upon Lucero (U.S. Patent No. 5,038,022) in view of Capers (U.S. Patent No. 4,669,596) and further in view of Perrie et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,173,955).

Applicant's representative explained to the Examiner that the Capers reference did not teach or suggest an interception and emulation unit, as required by the claimed invention. The Examiner admitted that the Capers did not teach or suggest an interception and emulation unit as recited in claim 31.

With respect to the Lucero reference, the Applicant's representative stated that the Lucero reference did not teach or disclose an interception and emulation unit, as required by the claimed invention. Furthermore, the Applicant's representative explained to the Examiner that the Lucero reference did not teach or suggest the retrofitting of an existing gaming machine for cashless gaming, but rather the gaming machine is made at the outset with a cashless gaming system.

With respect to the Perrie reference, the Applicant's representative stated that an interception and emulation unit is not taught or disclosed in the Perrie reference, as required by the claimed invention. Furthermore, the Applicant's representative explained that the Perrie reference does not disclose a gaming machine where a player can cash out either by cash or credit, as proffered by the Examiner. The Examiner admitted that the Perrie reference, and in particular Col. 8, lines 15-20, does not teach a gaming machine capable of cashing out either by cash or credit.

The Examiner suggested that the Applicant submit a request for reconsideration or a request for continued examination. The Examiner also noted that the Applicant needed to submit corrected drawings.